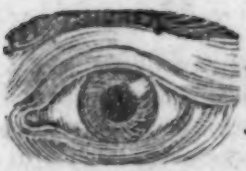
THE  EYE:

BY OBADIAH OPTIC.

——*VARIOUS OBJECTS FROM THE SENSE,*
VARIOUSLY REPRESENTING. MILTON.

Vol. II.] *THURSDAY, OCTOBER* 20, 1808. [No. 16.

Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up.
JOB iv. 15.

I AM well pleased that my last number has called forth some considerations from ABRAHAM AIRY, but the inconclusiveness of his arguments, and general course of his reasoning, sometimes inclines me to think that he was not serious, if so, he is surely in an error, for the subject is a serious one; but be this as it may, we will take up his essay, and give it a serious answer.

Observation 1*st*. "That there are angels and spiritual beings in Heaven, none will deny who believe in the doctrines of revelation, and the immortality of the soul; but that there are faries, elves, gnomes, sylphs, &c. will require a counter-revelation to prove, and I think it a sufficient reason for disbelieving their existence, that we have no account of them in the sacred writings."

Were it true that no mention is made in the sacred writings of such existences as we are arguing for, yet it would be no sufficient reason to disbelieve their being. We are no where informed in scripture, that the moon is inhabited, yet he must indeed be a poor philosopher, who, considering the nature of cause and effect, can for a moment hesitate receiving it as a truth; but the scripture is not silent on this subject—Satan is called the prince of the power of the air; spirits are mentioned in almost every page, their duties are described, and their guardianship made evident: They are not confined to Heaven, they encamp around the dwellings of the righteous; and kingdoms have their angels, who support their rights, and by their instrumentality avert dangers and fight their battles,*

* Daniel 10th passim. 2 Kings xix. 35. 2 Sam. xxiv. 15.

or punish them for their transgressions. By these observations, I think it is evident, that angels and spriritual beings are not in their operations limited to Heaven, if thereby we understand a place dignified beyond human comprehension with the immediate presence of the great SUPREME in ineffable glory: That spirits are not unheard of in scripture, and that even a proposition may be true, though not expressly found in the pages of the sacred canon. Names with me are of no importance, whether they be called sylphs or angels, faries, or as among the Arabs, ginn and peri, affects not the argument —I contend for existence.

The instances I gave from scripture, were adduced simply to prove that the opinion of spirits and their operations on man was familiar among the Jews; but our correspondent has thought proper to make several observations, which, although they are foreign to our purpose, yet, as they involve principles not, in my opinion, strictly consonant with the sacred volume, must not pass unnoticed.

Obs. 2*d*. "SAUL's evil angel, I believe, was simply the temper of his mind, the pride of his heart, and his want of confidence in the GOD of Israel." That these were the effects of the operation of the evil spirit, is granted—but not the spirit—remark, it is always said, "an evil spirit from the LORD"—but evil dispositions could not come from him who is purity itself. Evil spirits are under his controul, as well as wicked men, so are storms, tempests, hail and fire—he sends these forth, they obey his will, they smite a man or a nation: An evil spirit commissioned by HIM, punished SAUL, while the good man was, by a good spirit, protected from SAUL's malevolently poised javelin.

About SAMUEL we have no dispute, only let our correspondent know, there is no "himself" in the original, I would caution therefore our friend hereafter not to venture on hearsay.

The 3*d* observation of our opponent, deserves not a serious answer; the whole doctrine of demoniac possession seems thereby to be thrown into ridicule—"Do we not often hear the assertion "*the devil is in him?*"—So, when the devils were commanded by the word of authority to leave the man, when they were permitted to go into the swine, when they spake, petitioned, and declared that JESUS was the SON of GOD, all this was nothing more than an opinion, such as "the devil is in him"—and yet our opponent pretends to believe scripture evidence!

Obs. 4th. "If spirits have no bodies, they possess no materiality, consequently are nothing more than ideas." This is a most dangerous doctrine: The spirits of just men made perfect have no bodies, the bodies are in the grave, they possess no materiality, and by this doctrine, would be only ideas—our souls turn from such an assertion with disgust!—we rejoice in our existence, our assurance is, that our spirits when freed from this house of clay, have a house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, and cannot embrace the uncomfortable doctrine of materialism.

Having thus noticed our correspondent's chief points, I shall pursue the subject a little farther.

In the first place, the greatest men in all ages have admited that it was strictly agreeable to analogy, that the chain of existence was inseparably connected, and infinitely extended, that all things and places were full of life, that every clime and country has its inhabitants suited to its temperature and soil: It is also now admitted, that the CREATOR has filled his universe with an infinity of worlds, and consequently with an infinity of inhabitants. It is true, with their inhabitants at present, we are unacquainted, their powers are unknown and their excellent qualities hidden from our view, but let us remember, as they are our FATHER'S children, they must of necessity be intelligent.

We know that our earth, in performing its annual revolution, describes a vast circle round the sun, and can we suppose that the little spot EARTH, only possesses intelligent beings, and the amazing area of that amazing circle has no inhabitants! The position does not seem rational—Satan, I have said before, is called the prince of the power of the air, and as on earth there are good and bad men, so in air there may be good spirits, and the scripture is clear that there exist bad ones. On this subject, the following observations from ANACHARSIS' travels may not be without their use, the language is forcible, and generally speaks my opinion.

"But why, said I, do you place man at the extremity of the chain? Is the immense space which separates him from the DIVINE BEING only one vast desert? The Egyptians, the Chaldean magi, the Phrygians, and the Thracians fill this interval with beings as much superiour to us as we are to the brutes.

"I meant, replied EUCLID, only to speak of visible beings. It is to be presumed that there are above us an infinite num-

ber of others who escape our sight: From the rudest kind of existence we have ascended by imperceptible degrees to our own species; and, in proceeding from that limit to the DIVINITY, we must, no doubt, pass through different orders of intelligences, by so much the more glorious and pure, as they approach nearer to the throne of the ETERNAL BEING.

"This opinion, which is conformable to the progress of nature, is equally ancient and general among various nations. From them we have borrowed it; and we believe the earth and the heavens to be filled with genii, to whom the SUPREME BEING has confided the government of the universe. We distribute them throughout all animated nature, but principally in those regions which extend around and above us, from the earth to the sphere of the moon. There exercising an extensive authority, they dispense life and death, good and evil, light and darkness."

On the whole, I consider the belief of spiritual beings, not visible to us, and rising in gradation from man towards the great SUPREME, in endless proportion, a rational doctrine, not contrary to scripture, destructive of infidelity, and very pleasing to man, and I agree with ADDISON that "The person who is *even* terrified with the imagination of ghosts and spectres, is much more reasonable than one who, contrary to the report of all historians, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of spirits fabulous and groundless." OBADIAH OPTIC.

ORIGINAL.

THE EYE-LASH.—No. VII.

ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL. *Declaration of Independence.*

IT is a good omen in a republican government to see its citizens so cautious in the choice of their servants—As in other countries, we do not call those instrusted with our rights, our RULERS, for in reality, they are not any other than the people's slaves; we can punish them if they act amiss—we can deprive them of their office, and inflict the severest pain—the pain of an avowed disapprobation of their conduct by a free and independent people. We indeed have not styled ourselves the masters of our representatives—but that term is only omitted—*because, serenely conscious of the fact, we disdain the ostentatious appellation.* There is a strange manner of electioneering into which we are fallen—it is a conclusion

universally drawn, that the candidate who has the fewest vices, has the most virtues; and therefore our politicians, instead of setting forth the qualifications, hold up the crimes of all to public view—our newspapers are filled respectively with the exaggerated faults of their opponents, and recommend the less iniquitious of the canditates to the support of the people. Shame on such proceedings—no allowance for inconsiderate errors!——

Pardon me, Mr. OPTIC, I had for a moment forgotten the '*Eye*' is no *political* observer.—The following letter claims attention:—

MR. EYE-LASH,

I WISH you would take some measures to reform the manners of the gentlemen, they have become so impolite and brutish of late, as to be intolerable—as a lady walks along the street, she sees a *caucus* of fellows waiting at some corner, to stare her out of countenance—the big hats which we now wear, afford us no protection; these impudent fellows stoop low enough to peep at our faces, and with a grin they turn to one another and make their remarks. I suppose, in a short time, we shall be obliged to resume our veils to protect ourselves from insult. The gentlemen should be taught that ladies walk the streets for more important purposes than to be seen; that nothing is more provoking to a lady, than to be looked at. I shall write you another letter on this subject: In the mean time, I am your obedient servant, HARRIOT.

Miss HARRIOT should be careful how she inflicts a stigma generally on the gentlemen—some are so indecorous as to stare a lady out of countenance, but their numbers I hope are small—I would recommend the use of veils to the ladies, and these veils should descend some distance below their chins.—The season is now approaching when a lady can have no excuse for not being *completely* clothed. Long sleeves would be an excellent addition to a lady's dress, they would not only prove an antidote to the inclemency of the weather, but save a number of severe reflections on the shape of their arms. It it is true, the ladies have a right to please themselves in the choice of their dresses, but then, modesty might be consulted.

This subject has been so frequently canvassed, that any remarks of mine would be superfluous—it ought however to be the rule of the ladies, never to follow any fashions but such as would bear the strictest scrutiny of delicacy and propriety.

G.

SELECTED.

ERASTUS AND ELIZA.—A TALE.

ERASTUS, at the expiration of his clerkship to a merchant, saw himself in possession of a fortune, which, in a few years, with success, might have increased to the height of his ambition. He made a favourable impression on the heart of the fair ELIZA, his master's daughter, and married her soon after he was settled, with the consent of her father, who retired from business, and passed the remainder of his days in ease and calmness.

They had but a few years enjoyed the happiness they imparted to each other, before ERASTUS, by unexpected losses, and the bankruptcy of a house abroad, was robbed of all his fortune. He now forever looked on the lovely ELIZA with pain—"Canst thou still love the man who has reduced thee to poverty? Indeed thou canst," said he, pressing her hand with all imaginable tenderness. "Heaven knows I have not brought my misfortunes on myself; we must not repine, and yet so lovely a family"—at which time he cast his eyes on his little rogues, who were playing on the carpet, and then on ELIZA—he saw the tear flow down her cheek, and wept. Whatever she could suggest to give him ease, she spoke with all the tenderness imaginable: "We will not weep then, my ELIZA, perhaps we may yet know happier hours." The attention of the little ones was drawn by their tears. One asked the mother why she wept; and another with inquisitive love, why papa cried: ERASTUS kissed them, and said he would weep no more, bade them be good, and Heaven would bless them.

Thus passed their hours till his affairs were settled, when he paid to the utmost whatever he owed to mankind; such was his character that many offered him money, which he declined, as he had already found that industry could not insure success. By others he was advised to go abroad, and look into the affairs of the house by the bankruptcy of which he had so considerably suffered. This he resolved on. When he told his intention to ELIZA, she wept at the thoughts of parting; she dreaded the dangers he would be exposed to, more than poverty itself, and would not listen to him, unless he would consent to her accompanying him on the voyage—"Alas! thou best of women, you forget your condition;

Eliza cannot think that any thing but the hopes of bettering our fortunes could prevail on me to leave her. Were I to wait till the time was past when you might accompany me without hazarding your life, the delay might be dangerous; even then thy tender limbs could but poorly endure fatigue. I go, that Eliza, her little ones, and that infant, which soon will claim its share of my affection, may never taste the bitter cup of poverty. The little remainder of our fortunes I will leave with thee; if that should be exhausted, which Heaven forbid, before I am enabled to congratulate thee on our happier circumstances, sure then thou wouldest not know the misery of absolute want; thy Erastus still has friends; I have been unfortunate, my Eliza, but not base."

By arguments of this kind he prevailed on her to acquiesce in his design. "Support yourself in my absence, said he, we shall not long labour under misfortunes we have not deserved. If any thing advantageous should happen to fix me abroad, will Eliza follow me?" "Will—how can Erastus doubt it, said the lovely wife; with you no climate can be displeasing, without you no circumstances can make me happy." "Thou dear, dear woman, said he, clasping her in his arms, how have I deserved thy love?"

At length the time came which was to separate them from each other; no words can express the pain they felt at parting; Erastus, who had, without knowing it, supported himself by endeavouring to support his Eliza, wept when he embraced the best of wives. The tears choked his voice, when he told his little ones to be dutiful to their mother. At the last embrace he would have spoke, but found the effort vain; he gazed on her a few moments with a look which may be much easier conceived than described, and silently left her in all the grief a human breast can know.

Eliza now retired to one of the environs, where her thoughts were generally employed upon Erastus; sometimes when they had wandered from their usual subject, they were recalled to it by one of the little ones asking where papa was? upon which she could not help pointing out the distant hills, and saying, that he was a thousand times more distant than they were, an idea but seldom awaked without producing tears.

Happily for her, she received a letter from him with assurances of his welfare, at a time when she most wanted consolation; and some months after came to her hand the following:

MY DEAREST ELIZA,

"You will naturally believe I write this with the utmost joy, since I can inform you, my dearest wife, that I am now settled in such a way, as will soon make up for our late ill fortune. A more particular account I reserve till I am happy in thy conversation. I have sent a bill, though I cannot suppose you want it, that nothing may possibly detain you from my arms. Haste to a husband, who loves you better than himself, and believe that absence has made you dearer to him than ever."

ELIZA no sooner received this welcome letter, than she began to prepare for her departure; by the first vessel therefore that was ready, she set sail, and took with her a female servant to assist her in the care of the children. She found no other, scarcely indeed so many, inconveniences as she expected, which arose from the humanity of the captain, who, unlike many of his brethren, compassionated the inconveniences which attend those who are unaccustomed to the sea.

The wished-for shore was now in view, and ELIZA's heart exulted at the thoughts of her approaching happiness. Scarcely however was she landed, before her spirits sunk at the appearance of a funeral which passed by her; her ill boding fancy immediately suggested to her that it might possibly be her husband; she could not avoid enquiring who it was, when she heard that it was a stranger, whose name was ERASTUS. The colour left her cheek, she fainted in the arms of her maid, and recovering, found herself in the house of a stranger, whose hospitality was awakened by the appearance of her distress. "Was it for this, said she, I passed the danger of the sea?—Unhappy woman, in having escaped its perils! Alas! I promised myself some years of uninterrupted happiness. Good Heaven, my sorrows will end but with my life!" Thus did she exclaim in broken sentences, till again she sunk her fainting head—and found herself supported at her recovery by the husband she imagined to be no more. *(to be concluded)*

ARISTIPPUS the philosopher was fond of sumptuous entertainments, and loved court parade. Dyonysius the tyrant once asked him in a sarcastic manner, "Why philosophers were often seen at the gates of princes, but princes were never at the doors of philosophers." "For the same reason," replied the sage, "that physicians are found at the doors of the sick, and not the sick at the doors of the physicians."

Poetical Department.

ORIGINAL.

MORNING MEDITATIONS.

THE landscape brightens, and an orient gleam
Shoots o'er the spring-clad mountains of the east;
The fair round moon dissolves in silv'ry light,
The star of morning fades and sinks to rest.

The partridge whistles o'er the dew-moist mead,
The speckled pheasant beats the sounding grove,
The noisy wood-pecks clamour o'er the fields,
And hill and dale breathes melody and love.

The balmy breezes sweep the flow'ry vales,
In mild, grey light winds on the lucid rill;
With living gold the sun-beam tips the clouds,
The snow-white torrent glitters on the hill.

Now, thro' the clouds the radiant sunshine streams,
The clouds slow scatt'ring from the blaze retire;
Here, fleeting shadows sweep the spacious plains;
There, lofty mountains glow with moving fire.

Here, hanging forests and leaf-loaded groves,
Fringe the gay meadows and the sun-gilt fields;
There, nodding blue-top'd hills o'erfrowning all,
Draw the wild lightnings and condense the rains.

O! how is man with all things lovely bless'd!
The earth green-clad, the cool flow'r-scented gale;
Nectareous fruits of ev'ry taste or hue,
And music, gay or sad, to charm each vale!

What are the dull, the cold unmeaning joys,
Which short-lived pow'r or riches can impart,
To that warm glow which this elysian scene
Pours o'er the youthful poet's swelling heart.

But hark! a wildly melancholy plaint,
Breaks thro' the joyful music of the vale;
Is it the dove's lone lamentable coo,
Or some sad lovers, doleful, plaintive tale?

'Cease, cease your songs, obtrusive warblers, cease,
Retire gay light, and visit not the grove;

Come gloomiest night, o'erhang this sick'ning scene;
She loves me not, alas! whom most I love.

'Who could have thought her soft and music tongue,
Would e'er so harsh or so discordant prove;
That fell displeasure e'er would fire that eye,
Which once beam'd mildness, ecstacy and love?'

Ungrateful man! because a fair-one frowns,
He spurns our dearest happiness as dust;
Calls life a burden! our's a wretched world;
And looks on fair creation with disgust!

And ah! how many like this lover mourn,
The fools of fortune, and their conscience curse;
And as the earth more gay and lovely smiles,
Their souls within grow darker and more fierce.

The pale-faced sot abhors the lovely scene,
Shuts close his windows and in darkness lies;
The gambler sighs, impatient for the night,
Then o'er the sick'ning lamp his fortune tries!

Yon harmless bird that weeps her stolen nest,
Would strike a thief with horror at his deed;
The soft-eyed dove that wails her murder'd mate,
Would give a murd'rer's guilty heart to bleed.

How frail the base of happiness below!
By one small crime, in spite of wealth o'erthrown!
How is it frail? is virtue not its base?
As fix'd as GOD, as lasting as his throne!

Wisely the law of nature has ordain'd,
A torturing pang shall each vile deed pursue;
From ev'ry virtue that a joy shall spring,
And constitute *true happiness* below.

Then what are riches, if the haughty lord
Can buy no balm, to soothe his troubled heart?
Or what is pow'r, if brute, adoring crowds,
No *real* joy to tyrants can impart?

Lo! bless'd with freedom and a conscience pure,
Content, the farmer counts and feeds his flocks;
Each morn goes blithely whistling to his fields,
And, swell'd with joy, on all creation looks.

Forth walk the virtuous, their untainted hearts
Expand with pleasure as this scene they view,
Their souls accordant smile when nature smiles,
And grateful raptures in their bosoms glow.

THE STRANGER.

ORIGINAL.

GUARDIAN SPIRITS.

ALONE, sad and tired, in a tree's friendly shadow,
T' obtain a short respite from sorrow I sought;
'Twas a pleasant retreat, my couch was the meadow,
I courted repose as oblivion of thought.

But soon as my eyes closed on objects surrounding,
My senses awoke, and I saw in the air
A thousand bright spirits, their music resounding
Harmonious, and I had a place in their care.

A black fiend malicious his broad wings extended,
And swift to annoy me thro' æther he flew;
An angel, more pow'rful, my person defended,
And, vanquish'd, the sprite in confusion withdrew.

Refresh'd, I awoke from my slumbers, and cheerful,
My heart flow'd with gratitude warm and serene,
To HIM who protects me from dangers so fearful,
By spirits innum'rous, by mortals unseen.

ALICIAN.

ORIGINAL.

TO AURELIA, WITH TWO OR THREE PENS.

TO thy fair fingers I resign,
These proxies of the will;
AURELIA, let the task be thine
This lesson to fulfill.

Fearless to guide these feather'd darts,
And make thy power known;
Cupid cannot destroy more hearts
Than thou, tho' cold thine own.

Teach the rash, squinting thief of love,
His artifice is vain;
And to the busy urchin prove,
Thou wilt thy pow'r maintain!

Superiour rise above all fear,
Let cringing lovers bow;
Their protestations cease to hear,
Be independent thou!

Ah no! let other themes engage,
And gen'rous deeds mature
Your youthful mind, let every page,
And line, thy peace secure.

Should love, with all its pleasing pow'rs,
Engage these pens to write;
May virtue calm the passing hour,
And ev'ry word indite.

Should friendship guide the willing pen;
Friendship! a heav'n-born guest,
To harmonize contrary men,
And make each other bless'd.

Ah, then beware, for genuine friends
Are rarely to be found;
Friendship, a cloak for treach'rous ends,
All hypocrites surround.

May virtue, probity and truth,
Thy maiden charms approve;
And then may Heaven reward the youth
AURELIA deigns to love.

Then guide these pens with willing hand,
And bid them thus declare,
'He that my heart would e'er command,
Must love with virtue share.'

These pens, of beauty emblems are;
Like beauty's fading bloom,
From good, with all thy prudent care
To bad they pass, as soon.

And beauty too, like JONAH's gourd,
Must pass; each fleeting breath
(Tho' thou art courted and adored)
Points to disease and death.

And when disease and death shall come,
Be thou for death prepared,
That, rising from the dreary tomb,
Heav'n may be thy reward. F.